



## TANCREDI

For more than 40 years, this abstract painting by Italian artist Tancredi Parmegianni (Feltre 1927 - Roma 1964) was in the possession of American poet, playwright, and associate of Beat Generation writers, Alan Ansen (January 23, 1922 – November 12, 2006), who lived in Athens, Greece.

Alan Ansen was not a collector as such and if he were then he would rather have accumulated books and vinyl records of opera. He did however acquire a number of artworks along the way from friends and associates including fellow poet Gregory Corso, American artist Norris Embry and Italian painter Guido Cadorin.

Alan Ansen visited Venice for the first time in 1954 during his grand tour of Europe. Carrying a letter of introduction<sup>1</sup>, he met with Peggy Guggenheim with whom he became good friends. As he made the city his base for about 7 years, he became a frequent visitor to the Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, as part of Peggy's social circle. He even composed a number of masques to be performed in the garden during the summers and on occasion of her birthdays, starting with *The Return from Greece* in 1959.<sup>2</sup> It was Alan Ansen who introduced Peggy to many of the Beat writers.



*Alan Ansen in Venice, July 1957*

In the meantime, Tancredi Parmegianni, whose art was closely related to the Abstract Expressionist and Spatialist movements and who had met Peggy Guggenheim in 1951, used the studio space at the Palazzo offered to him by Peggy until they fell out in 1955. In 1954, she even organized a show for him at the Palazzo.

The current painting shows strong similarities with works of this period and particularly of the years 1954-55 when Tancredi used the greys and whites of the city, the grids, squares and lines. The soft colors and hues, the scratches in the painted surface and the inclusion of the nail heads into

the picture plane bear witness to the influence of Lucio Fontana's *Concetto Spaziale*. On the back of the work is a second painting that is very characteristic of the artist's style of the mid-Fifties.



*Back side of the painting on offer*

There is no doubt that Alan Ansen would have seen the works by Tancredi and very likely have met the artist himself. Alan had to leave Venice in 1962 and moved to Athens where he would remain for the rest of his life. In 1963, Peggy Guggenheim wrote to him:

*I am terribly sorry you are having so much trouble about getting your things sent. It seems every time they wrote you you were in some other place. But now finally they have withdrawn your paintings and are really getting on the move, tho I fear it will be ages before you get them all. I went to speak to them, and they sent me this copy of what i believe they sent you.<sup>3</sup>*

The shipping document makes allusion to 19 paintings as part of Alan Ansen's possessions to be moved to Athens:

*Ci pregiamo inoltre confermarVi che il giorno 16 corr. la Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim ha regolarmente consegnato al Sig. De Marco (imballatore) No. 19 dipinti i quali saranno oggi stesso imballati e trasportati a ns. magazzino.*

*In questo frattempo abbiamo già preparato tutta la documentazione per l'espletamento delle formalità doganali d'esportazione e per quelle dell'Accademia delle Belle Arti, entrambe le quali dovrebbero essere ultimate entro l'entrante settimana<sup>2</sup>*

**Tancredi Parmeggiani, Untitled, ca. 1954-55, tempera on hardboard, 120 x 140 cm, signed lower right *tancredi*. Painted on the reverse.**

Provenance:

Bequeathed to the current owner by Alan Ansen

*The artwork will be offered for sale in Spring 2023.*

*For more information contact*

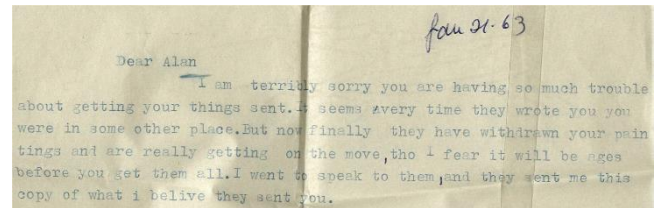
*Thomas Morin-Williams at [expert@morinwilliams.com](mailto:expert@morinwilliams.com)*

*Els Hanappe at [els@siakos-hanappe.com](mailto:els@siakos-hanappe.com)*

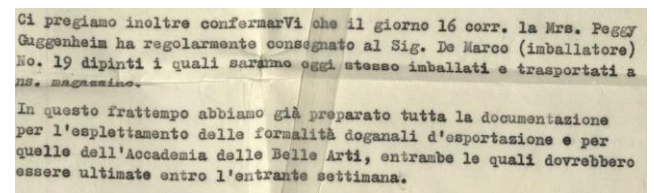
<sup>1</sup> Steven Moore, Introduction to *Contact Highs—Selected Poems 1957-1987*

<sup>2</sup> Alan Ansen, *Contact Highs—Selected Poems 1957-1987*, The Dalkey Archive Press, 1989, p. 45

<sup>3</sup> Typed and signed letter from Peggy Guggenheim to Alan Ansen, dated January 21, 1963, from the Alan Ansen papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard College Library



<sup>4</sup> Typed and signed letter from the shipping agent to Alan Ansen, dated January 17, 1963, from the Alan Ansen papers at the Houghton Library, Harvard College Library



*We are also pleased to confirm that on the 16<sup>th</sup> corr. Mrs. Peggy Guggenheim duly delivered to Mr. de Marco (packer) No. 19 paintings which will be packed and transported to our warehouse today.*

*In the meantime we have already prepared all the documentation for the completion of the formalities for the export customs and for those of the Academy of Fine Arts, both of which should be completed within the coming week.*

Correspondence and compositions of Alan Ansen are held in:

Alan Ansen collection of papers 1942-1953, The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, The New York Public Library

Alan Ansen papers ca. 1938-2006, Houghton Library, Harvard College Library